

REMARKS

Claims 1 – 3, 5 – 11, 13 – 31 and 66 are pending in the present application. Claims 1, 3, 10, 15 and 24 have been amended. Claims 4, 12 and 32-65 have been cancelled.

Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of claim 4. Accordingly, claim 4 has been cancelled and claim 10 has been amended. Claims 3 and 15 have also been amended, as discussed fully below.

The instant claims have also been amended to correct minor typographical errors. For instance, claim 1, line 5, has been amended to delete the second occurrence of “medium” and instead recite “method.” Claims 1 and 15 have been amended to recite, “adhered” instead of “adhere.” In claims 1 and 15, Applicants have amended the claims to clarify the deletion of a comma, which did not appear to be deleted in the last response. Lastly, in claim 24, Applicants have corrected the claim dependency. Applicants submit that no new matter has been entered by way of the above amendments.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §112, Second Paragraph

Claims 3 and 8-31 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph as being indefinite.

Specifically, claim 3 is rejected because the Examiner states that it is unclear whether a step of dissolving an acidic material in water or a second aqueous solution is related to the step

of adding acidic material in claim 1.

Applicants respectfully direct the Examiner's attention to the specification at page 32, lines 11-13 and page 34, lines 7-17, where it clarifies that the ionization constant (pKa) is used as a means to characterize acids suitable for use in the claimed method. Applicants have amended claim 3 in accordance with the specification.

With regard to claim 8, the Examiner questions whether the recited "acidic groups" are related to the acidic materials in claim 1. Applicants respectfully direct the Examiner's attention to the specification at page 41, lines 16-20, where it clarifies that the acidic groups in claim 8 are those present in the filter medium.

Finally, the Examiner notes that "cellulose fiber" lacks antecedent basis in claim 15. Applicants have deleted "cellulose fiber" and inserted therefor "filter medium." Applicants submit that each of the Examiner's concerns has been fully addressed. All amendments in response to the issues under 35 U.S.C. §112 are non-narrowing claim amendments. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the outstanding rejections.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 1-3, 5-7 and 66 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C §103(a) as being unpatentable over Plonsker (US Patent 3,804,815) in view of Hagemeyer et al. (US Patent 3,600,463) and Gillberg-Laforce et al. (US Patent 5,618,622).

Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of claim 4. The Examiner indicated claim 4 as being allowable in the previous Office Action. Consequently, amended claim 1 and the claims which depend therefrom should now be in condition for allowance.

Allowable Claims

Applicants thank the Examiner for the indication that the subject matter of claims 4 and 8-31 is either allowable or would be allowable if the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph (definiteness) are overcome. Applicants submit that the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph have been overcome herein. Additionally, claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of allowable claim 4. Therefore, each of the pending claims contains allowable subject matter. In view of the foregoing, Applicants believe the pending application is in condition for allowance. A Notice of Allowance is earnestly solicited.

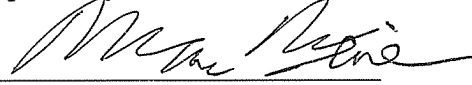
Conclusion

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Monique T. Cole, Reg. No. 60, 154 at the telephone number of the undersigned below.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37.C.F.R. §§1.16 or 1.14; particularly, extension of time fees.

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Respectfully submitted,

By 
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